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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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INFORMATION ON THE CHUKHOTSKIY PENINSULA

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2. General information and the Administrative division:

The CHUKHOTSKIY Peninsula and adjacent territories called the CHUKHOTSKIY National District (CHUKHOTSKIY NATSYONALNIY OKRUG) belonged to the PYETROPAVLOVSK (Kamchatka) District and were part of the Far Eastern Territory.

The Peninsula administration concentrated in ANADYR was subordinated through the PYETROPAVLOVSK authorities to Khabarovsk on AMUR where the Administration of the Far Eastern Territory was located.

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in the East was divided into*

The CHUKHOTSKIY National District extending from the river KOLYMA estuary in the West to the BERING Strait in the north-east and to the BERING Sea in the East. The nine Administrative regions (RAYON). [redacted]

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ANADYR (The Chief Administrative Centre of the District).
UST-BYELEYA West of the ANADYR estuary along the river
MARKOVO) ANADYR.
BUKHTA PROVIDYENIYA the southernmost Gulf of the Peninsula.
UELEN the most Eastern Cape of the Peninsula.
CHAUN on the CHUKHOTSKOYE Sea.
AMBARCHIK on the river KOLYMA Estuary.
VOSTOCHNAYA TUNDRA (probably west of the KOLYUCHINSKAYA GUBA).

The National District authorities in ANADYR were organised in a similar way to those in the USSR. They consisted of the District Party Committee headed by the chairman (PRYEDSYEDATYEL), a native Chukchy, with a Russian Secretary and a number of members representing the Russian and native population. There were also all necessary social and economic offices including the Education Board, Finance Institutions, Planning Section, MVD, Medical Services, Post and Telegraph etc.

The Regional authorities were a miniature of the District organisation and often the Regional Party Committee consisted only of a native chairman and as a rule a Russian Secretary.

[redacted] the National District Party
Committee was headed by TEGRENKEU [redacted]

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In each Region there was an Elementary School headed by Russian teachers. [redacted]

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The whole of the National District was guarded by the "Armed Force" consisting of 5 officers and 25 ORs from the NKVD troops. There were also some Militia personnel but only a couple of men in each of a few populated spots. In ANADYR itself the Militia numbered two men.

There was no Forced Labour and no camps in the National District. The only prison was in ANADYR, maintained by the local NKVD.

3. Population:

The population of the National District in 1936 consisted of approx 250 Russians (including NKVD personnel, all officials and their families) and of native inhabitants - Chukchies, Eskimos and Kamchadals.

[redacted] owing to the nomadic way of life of the Chukchies and Eskimos all attempts to register them failed and nobody knew in fact how many inhabitants the CHUKHOTSKIY National District had. The natives except Kamchadals avoided any registration.

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Their main food was reindeer meat, and soup, rice, barley, red caviare and BALYK (the back of dried sturgeon).

Settlements:

There were several types of settlement in the CHUKHOTSKIY National District.

(a) Static settlements were villages, Polar stations or Government "bases". The largest village and at the same time "a base" of the Government and Party authorities was ANADYR which is located on a small peninsula in the river ANADYR estuary. It included a few properly built buildings (one of them was the NKVD HQ and prison) but most of the houses were similar to the majority of the Russian and Kamohadal settlements - primitively built wooden huts constructed of double planks with earth between the wall planks. Roofs were made of wooden planks or tin. Windows were small. Such a hut consisted of two rooms and a kitchen primitively furnished and filthy. The only exception was the village of MARKOVO (west of ANADYR on the river ANADYR) which owing to its special geographical position (see below) was inhabited by the comparatively wealthy Russian settlers living in Russian-built wooden log houses, chiefly three-roomed, clean and rather well arranged.

All static settlements in the District were scattered and there was no planning of construction of settlements at all.

The only kolkhoz in the District was in ANADYR and life there was extremely poor.

(b) Mobile settlements

The Chukchiss lived in the "STOYBISHCHE" which meant a mobile settlement of 20-50 "yarangas" (family tents) with a herd of reindeer. The number of reindeer varied according to the wealth of the owner. There were "STOYBISHCHES" of 10-15,000 reindeer.

There were also static winter and summer camps usually known by the name of the owner (e.g. Camp BRAGINA or KHOZYAYSTVO BRAGINA).

5. Terrain:

The geographical features of the CHUKHOTSKIY National District are not uniform. There are vast tundra areas flat or slightly undulated with numerous extinct volcanoes called SOPKAs. There are also numerous mountain ranges extending in all directions. The mountain ranges are not very high but are very rocky and steep. In some areas they are narrow and steep like a wall and do not form any valleys. [redacted] a typical example of these rocky walls the VILYUNI Range (VILYUNYETSKIYE GORY) which extends south of ANADYR along the river VILYUNI, a tributary of the BOLSHAYA (VYELIKAYA) river.

The extinct volcanoes (SOPKAs) are not high and their slopes ascend gently.

Tundra areas

There is a marshy terrain covered by moss growing in tussocks with water beneath the surface. The water is only 25-30 centimetres deep and then it appears that there is solid ground.

The SOPKAs are completely bare and covered by masses of stones

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Chukchies a heathen Mongolian tribe constituted the largest group of the population. Except for a very few who occupied Government positions they were nomads speaking only their own language, very primitive in their mentality as well as in their way of life. They used to offer their wives or daughters for the night in order to honour a guest and they felt offended if a guest refused the generous offer. Their favourite drink was a home-made alcohol made of a very peculiar combination of children's urine and ants. They undressed and washed themselves once a year only. Their only food was reindeer meat boiled and a very strong pressed tea with sugar.

Their homes, called "yaranga", were large tents made of reindeer skin divided inside into two parts and thickly covered with reindeer skin and furs. They used to move from one place to another with fantastic speed. [redacted] they were able to move a camp consisting of approx thirty yarangas and thousands of reindeer in half an hour.

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Chukchies were very anti-Soviet. There were only a few Party members who carried out the pro-Soviet political life [redacted]

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Chukchies did not conceal their feeling towards the Soviet authorities. Very often Chukchy guides, without whom any movement was impossible, refused to accompany a Party or Government representative because they were told by their compatriots that it would cost them their lives. The method of getting rid of a Russian visitor was very simple. Chukchies built a separate yaranga for him supplied him with food and disappeared during his sleep without leaving a trace. In the morning a visitor woke up alone with his guide in the tundra.

The NKVD was completely helpless because they were only thirty against thousands of well-armed nomads who were perfect shots, and were officially allowed to be armed and to buy ammunition.

Chukchies earned their living by hunting and exchanging furs for goods. For that purpose a special Agency (INTYEGRALNIY SOYUZ) was formed by the Soviet Government. Chukchies delivered various kinds of furs such as bearskins (from the MARKOVO woods and the high mountains), grey wolves larger than the European variety, Arctic fox (white and blue), otters and wolverines (ROSOMAKHA).

Eskimos were not so numerous as Chukchies and lived along the sea coast earning their living by fishing and hunting sea animals which also formed their main food supply. They also traded with the Government Agency (INTYEGRALNIY SOYUZ). Their way of life was similar to the Chukchies but they were quieter. They were also rather anti-Soviet [redacted] They spoke their own language [redacted]

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Kamchadals a mixture of Mongolian and European blood were white and did not have a language of their own. They spoke either Chukchy or Russian or even English. They were not nomads and had their own settlements or lived with the Russians. They formed the most civilised part of the native population. Many of them had some education and occupied Government positions. They were less anti-Soviet than the others.

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except the higher part of the village (the prison and NKVD area).

6. Drainage:

[redacted] the river ANADYR is navigable for flat-bottomed craft and steam cutters between ANADYR and MARKOVO (approx 550 km). [redacted] the river BYELAYA is also partly navigable. The right bank of the river ANADYR is steep and rocky in many sectors, the left bank is almost everywhere flat.

All lakes which he saw were rather small and shallow. The lake banks in the tundras are flat.

7. Vegetation:

[redacted] the tundra areas are covered with moss and in some parts there are dwarf pines. Rocks in the mountain ranges are mainly covered by dwarf mountain pines. The soil there is 0.50-3 metres deep and beneath this is solid rock.

[redacted] large pine woods only in MARKOVO on the river ANADYR (approx 550 km along the river from ANADYR village). For some reasons [redacted] the MARKOVO area is like an oasis in the desert. In that area (the only one in the National District), the climate is more continental than in other parts and therefore tomatoes, potatoes and other vegetables grow there.

In the whole CHUKHOTSKIY District there are bilberries (called there GOLUBITSA and in Russia GOLUBIKA). The season for them is in August. The local inhabitants used to eat them fresh or else extract the juice from them. The bilberries contain a great percentage of vitamins and are very valuable in the normal diet which lacks the required vitamins.

8. Climate:

There is no spring or autumn in these parts of Asia. [redacted]

(i) Summer From end of May (approx 25th) until middle or end of September (approx 25th).

Minimum temperature 16-17° centigrade, maximum approx 26° centigrade. In August the sea at ANADYR is warm enough for bathing for a period of approx 15-20 days. As the sea water is warm only to a depth of approx 50 centimetres beneath the surface and is very cold deeper down, amateur bathers have to be very cautious.

In the MARKOVO area summer lasts approx four weeks longer (10 May until end of September) and is much warmer.

There is a real plague during the summer season (May-June) of mosquitos and swarms of midges (MOSHKARA). The MOSHKARA are dangerous only in the MARKOVO area where they are able to kill a dog. Therefore during the midge season special bonfires are made in order to save men and in particular dogs. Mosquitos are everywhere and are extremely annoying but from the point of view of malaria they are harmless.

There is very little rain (mainly showers) in summer and therefore there is no mud. Owing to the general moisture there is also no dust.

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from the proper cobble used in Russia for the paving of roads to enormous stones much larger than an average human size. Sometimes, they cover the SOPKA's surface in waves.

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Mountain ranges

the types of rock in the mountain ranges are entirely different from those of the SOPKAs. two types of rock:

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(a) The dark steel-coloured cliffs along the sea coast on both sides of ANADYR Bay and further inland. probably the ZOLOTOV Range

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(b) In the VILYUNI Range (VILYUNYEYSKIYE GORY) an entirely different type, a very hard dark brown and grey rock.

Geological research

in 1935 there was an expedition of geologists making research drilling in various parts of the District. He heard that they found coal and gold somewhere north of the BUKHTA PROVIDYENIYA. the gold lode extended under the BERING Strait far into ALASKA.

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Seacoast

the ANADYR Peninsula of which the highest point is Mount DIONISIYA has a rocky and steep coast line between the ANADYR village and Cape DIONISIYA. Further to the south and east of Mount DIONISIYA there is a sandy beach approx 10 km long. This is one of the few patches of sand on the CHUKHOTSKIY Peninsula.

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On the northern coast of ANADYR Bay, in particular in the narrow strait connecting the open sea with the OYEMEN Gulf there are cliffs or high and steep coastline.

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BUKHTA PROVIDYENYA the coastline there was in general high and steep except for a few flat sectors. The Bay itself appeared to be narrow and rather difficult of approach.

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The last sector of the coastline was at the URELEN Polar Station. The station itself was situated on the flat part of the coastline. The small peninsular itself was hilly and the coastline was higher and steep.

The ANADYR Gulf freezes during the winter period along 5-6 km of the coast. Further to the East the sea does not freeze.

every year in September in the ANADYR Gulf and in some other parts of the sea coast the heavy autumn storms and on-shore (westerly) winds result in the local inundation of the beaches by the sea. ANADYR itself was often flooded by the sea.

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11. Movement:

Movement in summer is possible only by inland waterways. The natives also used to ride reindeer. To walk in a tundra is almost impossible. [REDACTED]

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In winter the only types of traffic are sledges (called there NARTY) drawn by reindeer or dogs and the aerosleigh (AEROSANT).

A dog or reindeer-drawn sledge (12 dogs harness) could carry a load of 300 kg which includes one man and the dogs' food. In good hard snow (Feb - Mar) the daily trip could easily reach 300km with an average speed of 30 km per hour. In soft snow (Dec) 80 km per day is the maximum.

There is no difficulty with feeding reindeer because they look after themselves. Dogs are fed with "YUKOLA" a special fish food made of Siberian salmon (KYETA). Dogs are fed once a day at night only.

The mountain ranges form a serious traffic obstacle because there are very few passes and the ranges form a sort of wall. Therefore one has to top the range which often causes great difficulty.

12. Season for Military Operations.:

[REDACTED] the best season for any type of Militia operations there is in March when the snow is hard, the air is calm and visibility is comparatively good. Summer is undoubtedly impossible for any type of operations for except the navigable rivers movement is out of the question.

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As far as ANADYR itself is concerned [REDACTED] the best spot for landing from the sea is south of the village on the sandy beach between Cape DIONISIYA and a point marked as BRAGINA Winter Camp. There is approx 12 km of beach easy of approach. Mount DIONISIYA could easily be overcome and ANADYR taken from the South.

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There are also rare but very thick fogs chiefly in June and in September. Visibility is sometimes as little as 4 metres.

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During the April-May period there is constant daylight. In July there are a couple of hours of darkness. The sun is very dangerous for the eyesight and Europeans have to wear dark glasses in order to avoid temporary blindness which lasts for 5-6 days.

(ii) Winter: From end of September until middle of May (except the MARKOVO area).

Average temperature 17-18° Centigrade with constant strong winds in particular in February and March. In December and first half of January the air is completely calm. The depth of the snow cover is from 0.5 to 2 metres. In the MARKOVO area there are no winds but the temperature falls to -50° Centigrade.

Once or twice a month there are snow storms (BURGA) in the CHUKHOTSKIY District. Approx twice a year the snow storms are of such force that people caught by them cannot leave their tents. To relieve nature one has to walk tied with a rope in order to find one's way back to the tent. These heavy snow storms last sometimes for four days.

(iii) Generally the climate very healthy for Europeans. They do not suffer from malaria and the number of cases of scurvy is limited. As a remedy against scurvy a large amount of lemon juice was imported. Fresh vegetables and fruits were delivered from VIADIVOSTOK. While travelling in the tundra the local Russians used to make meat dumplings (PYELMYEN) in thousands and freeze them. They took the PYELMYEN with them and if necessary boiled them. this is the best food for tundra trips.

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In these climatic conditions European livestock cannot be bred. only in ANADYR some cattle, horses and a few pigs but they were kept in the stables and pigsties because of lack of fodder

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9. Visibility:

in the tundra areas there are some phenomena where visibility is concerned.

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Normally visibility is limited to approx 2 km (a sledge, a large animal or other large object). A man lying on the ground even covered only in moss is completely invisible. Often in winter the snow makes the scenery so uniform that even SOPKAs can hardly be seen. The SOPKAs in general could "disappear" astonishingly easily even in flat areas. In particular when covered by snow they are dangerous for low-flying planes. Neither the local experts nor the natives could explain these sudden appearances and disappearances of SOPKAs.

10. Aircraft landing:

in winter landing is good everywhere in flat areas but only on ski undercarriage. In summer there are no landing grounds whatever, one cannot land in a tundra.

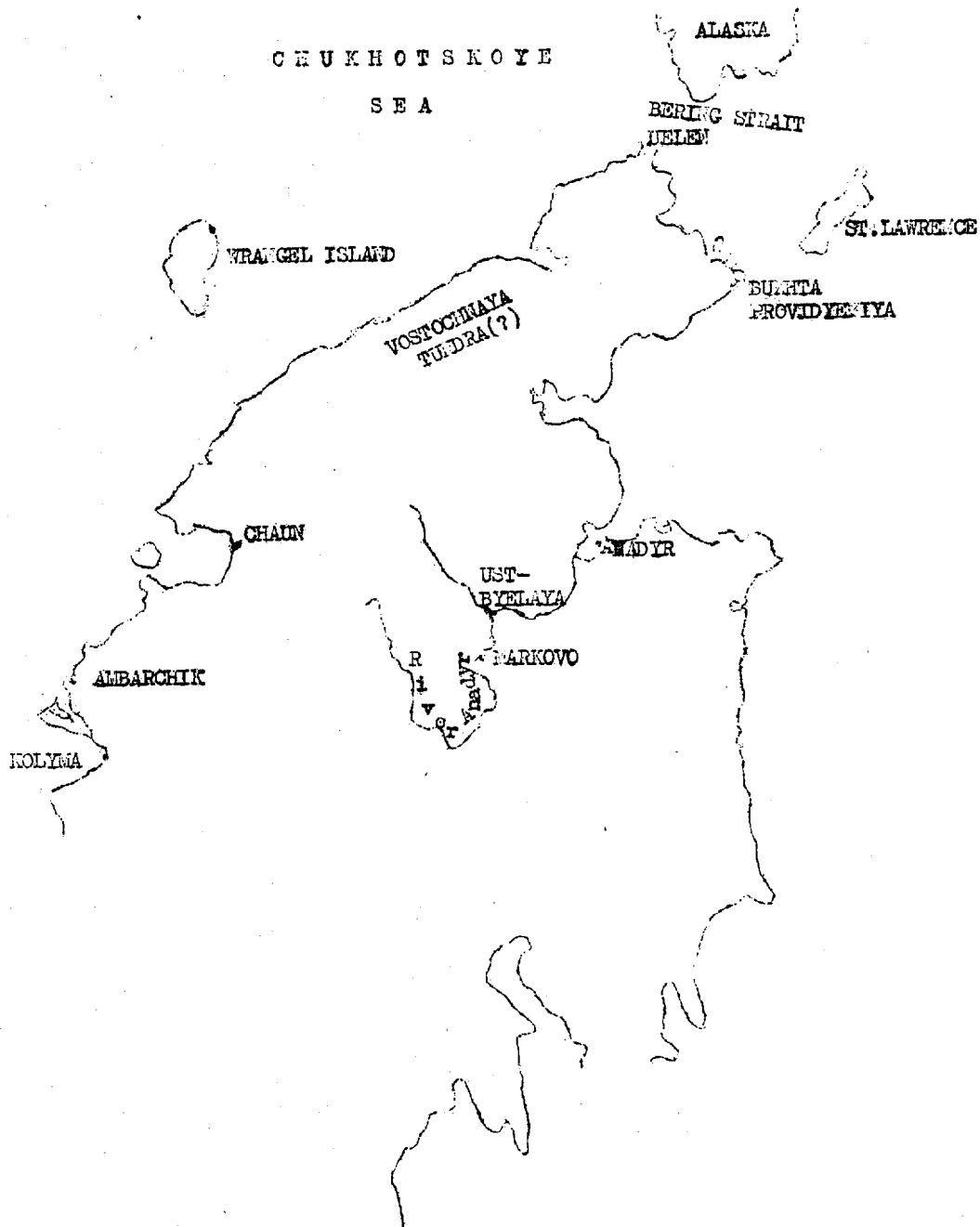
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/11. Movement

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ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE CHUKHOTSKIY NATIONAL DISTRICT

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